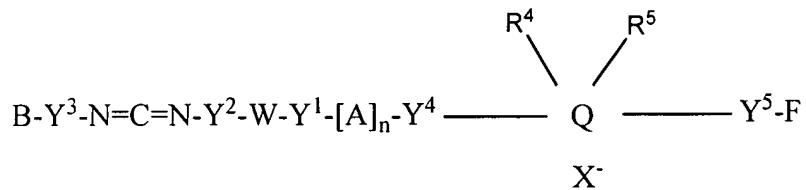


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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently amended) A method for detecting a nucleic acid ~~by hybridization~~
utilizing which comprises hybridizing a nucleic acid labeled with a labeling substance, wherein
the labeling substance is a fluorescent group-containing carbodiimide compound having at least
one group selected from a carboxyl group, a sulfo group, a phosphono group and a phospho
group which have substitution of an alkali metal, an alkaline earth metal or a basic group
containing a nitrogen or phosphorus atom, which is represented by the following general formula
(III):



(III)

wherein,

X represents a halogen atom or a sulfonic acid group;

A represents a functional group selected from the group consisting of $-\text{CH}_2-$, $-\text{NHCO}-$, $-\text{CONH}-$, $-\text{O}-$, $-\text{S}-$, $-\text{NR}^1-$ wherein R^1 represents a linear, cyclic or branched saturated or unsaturated aliphatic hydrocarbon group having 1-20 carbon atoms, $-\text{NR}^2\text{R}^3-$ wherein R^2 and R^3 each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched saturated or unsaturated aliphatic hydrocarbon group having 1-20 carbon atoms, or a cycloalkyl group, an aryl group or an aralkyl group which may have a substituent, provided that when one of R^2 and R^3 is a hydrogen atom, the other represents a linear or branched saturated or unsaturated aliphatic hydrocarbon group having 1-20 carbon atoms, or a cycloalkyl group, an aryl group or an aralkyl group which may have a substituent, or R^2 and R^3 may be bonded to each other to form as a whole a nitrogen-containing heterocyclic group which may contain an oxygen atom, $-\text{COO}-$, $-\text{OCO}-$, $-\text{NHSO}_2-$, $-\text{NHC}(\text{S})\text{NH}-$, and $-\text{SO}_2\text{NH}-$;

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n represents 0 or 1;

W represents a direct bond or a quaternary onium group;

Y¹, Y², Y³ and Y⁴ each represent a functional group represented by the general formula

(II) :

-(CH₂)_p-(L)_r-(CH₂)_q- (II)

wherein, L represents a functional group selected from the group consisting of -CH₂-, -NHCO-, -CONH-, -O-, -S-, -NR¹-; p and q each represent an integer of from 0 to 20; and r represents the integers 0 or 1;

B represents a hydrogen atom or a monovalent organic group being the same as or different from -W-Y¹-[A]_n-Y⁴; and

F represents a fluorescent group;

Q represents either a tertiary or quaternary nitrogen atom, or a tertiary or quaternary phosphorus atom;

R⁴ and R⁵ each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched saturated or unsaturated aliphatic hydrocarbon group having 1-20 carbon atoms, or a cycloalkyl group, an aryl group or an aralkyl group which may contain a substituent, provided that when one of R⁴ and R⁵ is a hydrogen atom, the other represents a linear or branched saturated or unsaturated aliphatic hydrocarbon group having 1-20 carbon atoms, or a cycloalkyl group, an aryl group or an aralkyl group which may contain a substituent, or R⁴ and R⁵ may be bonded to each other to form a nitrogen-containing heterocyclic group or a phosphorus-containing heterocyclic group, which may contain an oxygen atom as Q⁺R⁴R⁵-;

Y⁵ has the same meaning as defined for Y¹, Y², Y³ and Y⁴; and

at least one functional group selected from B, Y¹, Y², Y³, Y⁴, Y⁵, A, W, R⁴, R⁵ and F has at least one group selected from a carboxyl group, a sulfo group, a phosphono group and a phospho group which have substitution of an alkali metal, an alkaline earth metal or a basic group containing a nitrogen or phosphorous atom.

12. (Previously presented) The method according to Claim 11, wherein the functional group of the fluorescent group-containing carbodiimide compound is selected from B, Y¹, Y², Y³, Y⁴, A, and W in the formula (III) and has a least one group selected from a carboxyl group, a sulfo

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group, a phosphono group, and a phospho group which have substitution of an alkali metal, an alkaline earth metal or a basic group containing a nitrogen or phosphorus atom.

13. (Previously presented) The method according to Claim 11, wherein the functional group of the fluorescent group-containing carbodiimide compound is selected from Y^5 , R^4 , R^5 and F in the formula (III) and has at least one group selected from a carboxyl group, a sulfo group, a phosphono group and a phospho group which have substitution of an alkali metal, an alkaline earth metal, or a basic group containing a nitrogen or phosphorus atom.